IN THE CLAIMS:

Please substitute claims 1-24 with the following:

1. (Previously amended) A method for managing a plurality of nodes in a layered hierarchically organized database stored in a server on a computer network comprising:

accessing a subset of said nodes in response to a client request;

modifying one or more state attributes associated with said nodes to control merging and updating of layers to a resulting layered hierarchical database in response to said client request; and

managing said nodes using said state attributes.

2. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said state attributes indicate that a corresponding data element ~~should be~~ is one of updated, default, deleted, and added.

3. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein each one of said state attributes includes a value of one of default, replaced, modified, and deleted, indicating ~~indicate that~~ a last action taken on a corresponding data element ~~should be deleted~~.

4. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein each one of said state attributes comprises an eXtensible Markup Language (XML) format attribute ~~indicate that a corresponding data element should be added~~.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein said nodes are organized in a Document Object Model format.

6. (Previously amended) A manager for one or more nodes in a layered hierarchically organized database stored in a server on a computer network comprising:

a subset of said nodes configured to be accessed in response to a user request; and

one or more state attributes associated with said nodes configured to be modified to control merging and updating of layers to a resulting layered hierarchical database in response to said client request when said subset is used,

wherein said manager is configured to manage said nodes using said state attributes.

7. (Currently amended) The manager of claim 6, wherein said state attributes indicate that a corresponding data element ~~should be~~ is one of updated, default, deleted, and added.

8. (Currently amended) The manager of claim 6, wherein each one of said state attributes includes a value of one of default, replaced, modified, and deleted, indicating ~~indicate that~~ a last action taken on a corresponding data element ~~should be deleted~~.

9. (Currently amended) The manager of claim 6, wherein each one of said state attributes comprises an XML format attribute ~~indicate that a corresponding data element should be added~~.

10. (Original) The manager of claim 6 wherein said nodes are organized in a DOM format.

11. (Previously amended) A computer program product comprising:

a computer usable medium having computer readable program code embodied therein configured to manage a plurality of nodes in a layered hierarchically organized database stored in a server on a computer network;

computer readable code configured to cause a computer to access a subset of said nodes in response to a client request;

computer readable code configured to cause a computer to use said subset wherein one or more state attributes associated with said nodes configured to be modified to control merging and updating of layers to a resulting layered hierarchical database are modified in response to said client request; and

computer readable code configured to cause a computer to manage said nodes using said state attributes.

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12. (Currently amended) The computer program product of claim 11, wherein said state attributes indicate that a corresponding data element ~~should be~~ is one of updated, default, deleted, and added.

13. (Currently amended) The computer program product of claim 11, wherein each one of said state attributes includes a value of one of default, replaced, modified, and deleted, indicating ~~indicate that~~ a last action taken on a corresponding data element ~~should be deleted~~.

14. (Currently amended) The computer program product of claim 11, wherein each one of said state attributes comprises XML format attribute ~~indicate that a corresponding data element should be added~~.

15. (Original) The computer program product of claim 11 wherein said data nodes are organized in a DOM format.

16. (Previously amended) An apparatus comprising:

a subset of one or more nodes in a layered hierarchically organized database stored in a server on a computer network configured to be accessed in response to a client request;

one or more state attributes associated with said nodes configured to be modified to control merging and updating of layers to a resulting layered hierarchical database in response to said client request when said subset is used; and

a manager configured to manage said nodes using said state attributes.

17. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 16, wherein said state attributes indicate that a corresponding data element ~~should be~~ is one of updated, default, deleted, and added.

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18. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 16, wherein each one of said state attributes includes a value of one of default, replaced, modified, and deleted, indicating ~~indicate that~~ a last action taken on a corresponding data element ~~should be deleted~~.

19. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 16, wherein each one of said state attributes comprises an XML format attribute ~~indicate that a corresponding data element should be added~~.

20. (Original) The apparatus of claim 16 wherein said data nodes are organized in a DOM format.

21. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein said layered hierarchically organized database includes an organizational format corresponding to an organizational layout of an enterprise, wherein each one of said state attributes indicates a last action taken on a data element of one of said nodes, and wherein each one of said state attributes comprises an XML ~~eXtensible Markup Language (XML)~~ format attribute.

22. (Currently amended) The manager of Claim 6, wherein said layered hierarchically organized database includes an organizational format corresponding to an organizational layout of an enterprise, wherein each one of said state attributes indicates a last action taken on a data element of one of said nodes, and wherein each one of said state attributes comprises an XML format attribute.

23. (Currently amended) The computer program product of Claim 11, wherein said layered hierarchically organized database includes an organizational format corresponding to an organizational layout of an enterprise, wherein each one of said state attributes indicates a last action taken on a data element of one of said nodes, and wherein each one of said state attributes comprises an XML format attribute.

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24. (Currently amended) The apparatus of Claim 16, wherein said layered hierarchically organized database includes an organizational format corresponding to an organizational layout of an enterprise, wherein each one of said state attributes indicates a last action taken on a data element of one of said nodes, and wherein each one of said state attributes comprises an XML format attribute.